Shaping the Charter Narrative: An Authorizer's Story

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Colorado Charter School Institute





Who's in the room?





Introductions



What will we accomplish in the next 90 minutes?

- Discuss the existing charter narrative and what makes it effective
- Learn about CSI's journey to prioritize communications and to help shape the narrative
- Gain practical strategies to apply within your organization

What is the existing charter narrative in your community?



What is the existing charter narrative?

Charter schools are not held accountable.

Charter schools don't enroll children from underserved families. Charter school students do not perform any better than their peers attending district schools.

Charter schools are not public schools. /

Charter schools cream or cherry-pick the best students from traditional public schools.

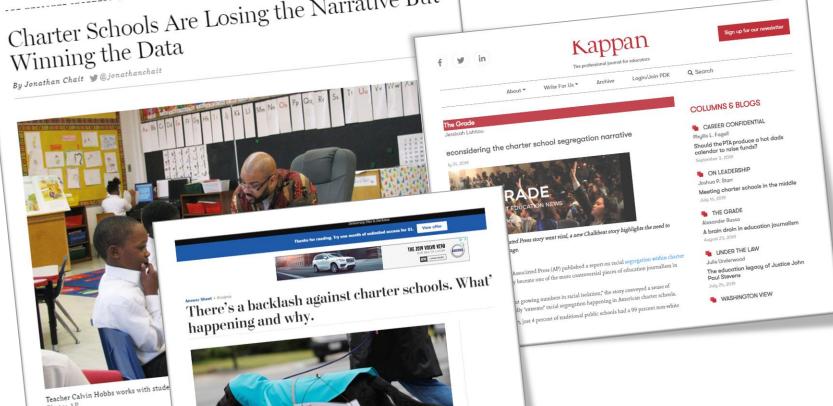
The existing charter narrative is...

Clear
Compelling
Consistent



Charter Schools Are Losing the Narrative But

Photo: AP







One Authorizer's Experience



Setting the Scene

- Statewide charter authorizer
- Data-driven team





Setting the Scene

- Regional media networks
- Technical writing vs. persuasive writing





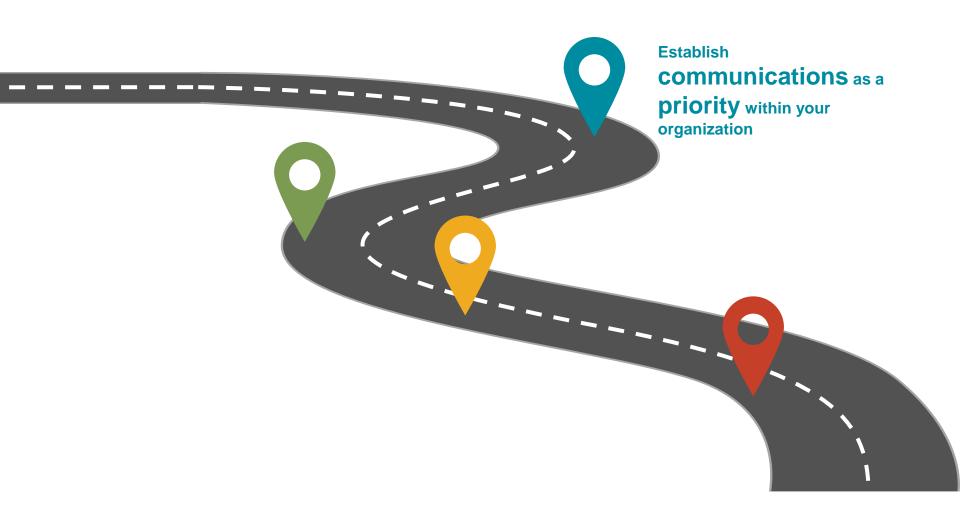


Our Journey





Our Journey





Prioritizing Communications

Staff

Time

Training

Collaboration

Platforms

Buy-in

Workshop: Prioritizing Communications

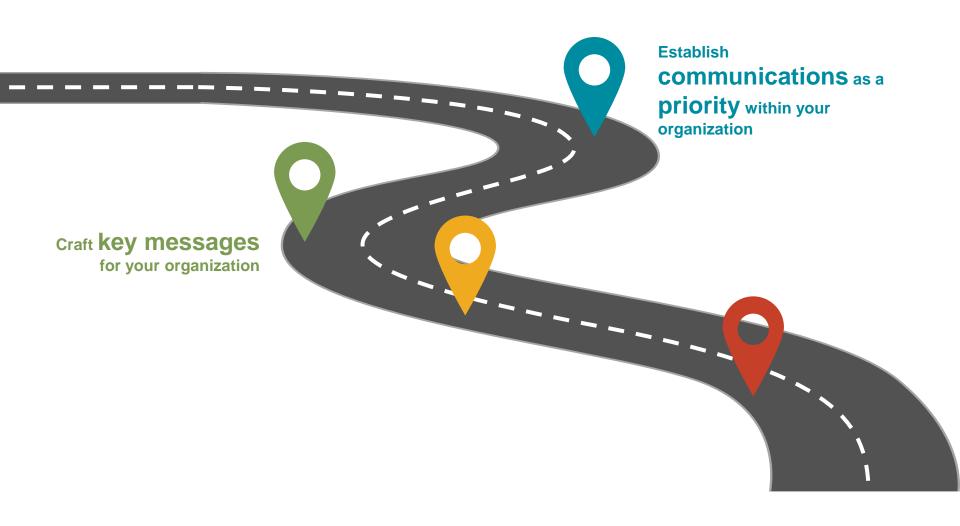
Share strategies that your authorizing office can (or does) use to prioritize communications







Our Journey



Why Key Messages?

Clear
Compelling
Consistent

Key Message Development

Content

- Mission, vision
- Key organizational themes and initiatives
- Commons misperceptions or areas of confusion
- Prove points with additional info (fact, quote, story)

Style

- Simple language (no jargon, abbreviations)
- Short sentences



Key Messages

CSI Key	Messages
2019 Update	

to improve school outcomes through high-quality charter school authorizing.

CSI students have access to 75 percent less funding than their district peers.

public school in which a student is enrolled.

that attend district schools.

CSI believes that public school students should receive equitable access to public funds regardless of the type of

Students attending CSI schools deserve the same level of access to public school resources as their peers

CHARTER SCHOOL INSTITUTE

		2019 Update
Theme	Messaging: These t options to choose fro	
History	➤ In response to the grow students, and an intere Colorado State Legisla ➤ "CSI has had a long hit the Charter School Ins	The following key messages about CSI are organized by theme. Some themes conta appropriate for their intended audience. These messages will be shared primarily thr
Model Diversity	CSI believes that every CSI is committee needs of their s CSI schools off Waldorf, Classi	Abbreviated mission: Our mission is to toster high-quality charte achievement gap. Mission Statutory mission: The mission of the Charter School Institute st offered through institute charter schools that deliver rigorous accessafe environment and on par with the highest-performing school.
Serving All Students	CSI is committed to the communities, particula	Abbreviated vision: Our vision is to be recognized as the nation: portfolio of high-performing charter public schools that use innov Vision Original vision: The vision of the Charter School Institute is to be authorizer by building a portfolio of high-performing charter public variety of successful and innovative educational designs, including the property of successful and innovative educational designs.
	Learners, low-ii o While lower tha continues to gri The CSI approach to a	Value Statement We believe that our singular focus on charter schools translates the unique nature of charter schools, and the ability to better ad- students.
Autonomy & Accountability	o CSI offers its so needs of their s academic, finar	The Colorado Charter School Institute (CSI) is a statewide chart sustaining a portfolio of high-quality school options that meet the CSI authorizes 40 schools across Colorado, from Durango serving over 18,000 PK-12 students.
Autonomy	CSI offers its schools to their students and com CSI provides schools v	 CSI understands charter schools and advocate for their suc CSI offers support, flexibility, and transparent accountability to serve their students.
Accountability	schools the freedom to	n implementing authorizing best practices.
Model Authorizer	o To fulfill its role as a	model authorizer, CSI continues to find and promote ways to partner with school districts

Authorizer

Funding

Equity

The following key messages about CSI are organized by theme. Some themes contain multiple key messages, so users can identify the most appropriate for their intended audience. These messages will be shared primarily through our publications, website and social media.

	 Abbreviated mission: Our mission is to foster high-quality charter public school choices, particularly those closing the achievement gap. 		
Mission	Statutory mission: The mission of the Charter School Institute shall be to foster high-quality public school choices offered through institute charter schools that deliver rigorous academic content and high academic performance in a safe environment and on par with the highest-performing schools, including particularly schools for at-risk students.		
	 Abbreviated vision: Our vision is to be recognized as the nation's most effective charter school authorizer by building a portfolio of high-performing charter public schools that use innovative educational designs to serve all students. 		
Vision	Original vision: The vision of the Charter School Institute is to be a national leader as a highly effective charter school authorizer by building a portfolio of high-performing charter public schools through authorizing practices that promote a variety of successful and innovative educational designs, including an emphasis on schools that serve at-risk youth.		
Value Statement	We believe that our singular focus on charter schools translates into tailored customer service, a keen understanding of the unique nature of charter schools, and the ability to better advocate for the needs of charter schools and their students.		
About CSI	 The Colorado Charter School Institute (CSI) is a statewide charter school authorizer committed to creating and sustaining a portfolio of high-quality school options that meet the needs of all students. CSI authorizes 40 schools across Colorado, from Durango to Steamboat Springs and Fruita to Colorado Springs, serving over 18,000 PK-12 students. CSI understands charter schools and advocate for their success. CSI offers support, flexibility, and transparent accountability to ensure its schools are in the best position possible to serve their students. 		
	orizing best practices.		







Key Messages Example

Serving All Students	 CSI is committed to the creation and success of high-quality charter public schools that meet the needs of their communities, particularly those serving at-risk populations and working to close the achievement gap. CSI takes an active approach to evaluating and improving upon service to all students. CSI has prioritized access and equity by growing its team of experts, offering expanded professional development opportunities for school staff, implementing data-driven improvement strategies, and committing financial resources at both the school and CSI level. CSI's portfolio of schools serves a student population that is reflective of the state average for English Learners, low-income students, and minority students. While lower than the state average, the percentage of students with disabilities served by CSI schools continues to grow.
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Workshop: Crafting Key Messages





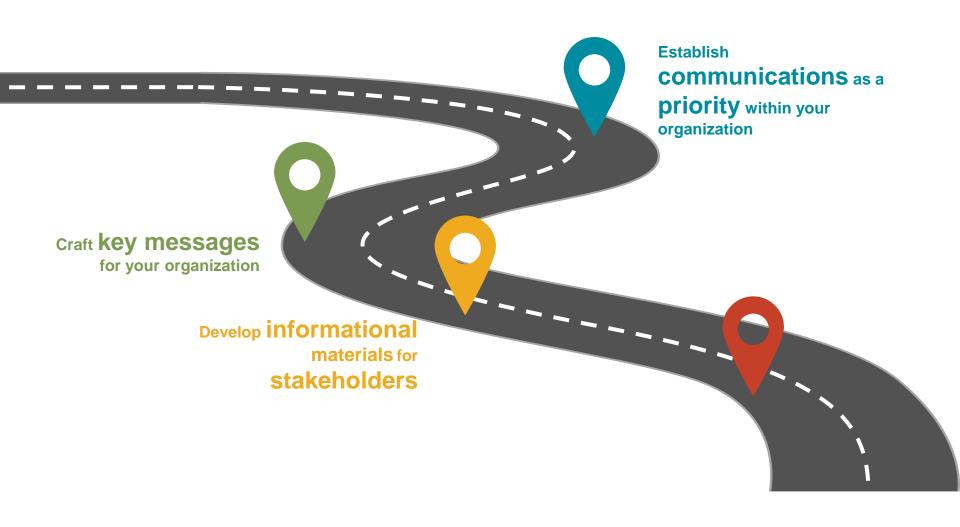
Workshop: Crafting Key Messages

Serves all Students (Access)





Our Journey





Needs Assessment

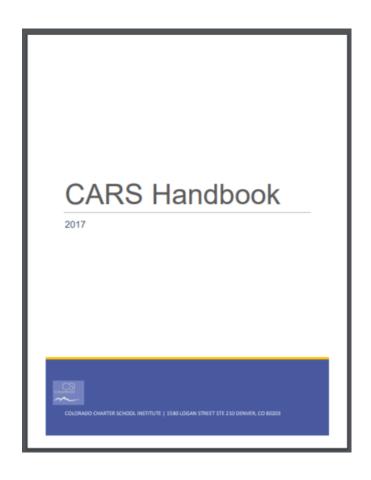
Audiences

Existing Materials

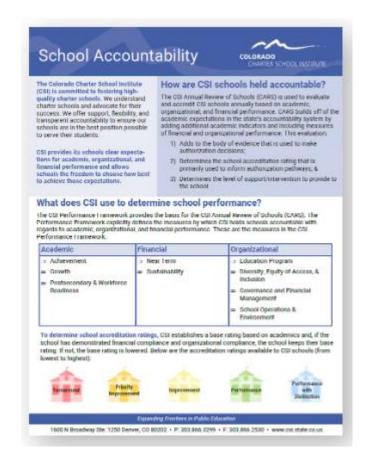
Access Points



Audience/Info Alignment

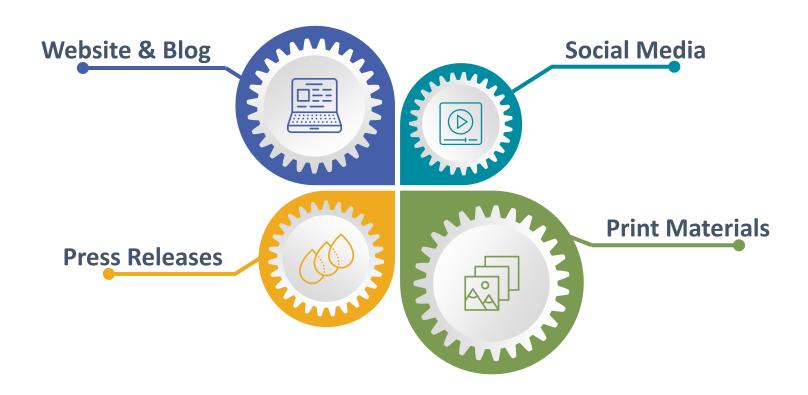








Where to Share





Example: One Pagers









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Pingnoloi Indicator	Does not sheet Value	Approaching Value	Maga Value	Eccesion Value	PREDICTS PROTECT
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Example: One Pagers

Serving All Students



The Charter School Institute (CSI) is committed to fostering high-quality charter school options, with a particular focus on service to and performance of underserved populations. We take an active approach to evaluating and improving upon service to all students.

Prioritizing Access & Equity

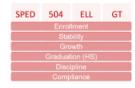
The CSI Board Resolution 1549 (2015) affirmed the achievement gap, charging staff with increasing and improving services.

The CSI Special Education Report (2016) was commissioned to review the state of its special education programs and services and provide recommendations to CSI created a National Partnership (2017) with the National Center on Special Education in Charter Schools to develop a screener and tiered supports to meet the needs of schools.

CSI developed its Student Services Screener and Tiers of Support to both assess and support schools in providing equal access and quality programs to students who qualify for specialized supports.

Student Services Screener

CSI utilizes its Student Services Screener to consider issues of access and equity. The screener tool considers a school's performance across 6 indicators for students with disabilities, students with 504 plans, English Language Learners, and Gifted and Talented students.



Tiers of Support

CSI utilizes its Tiers of Support to ensure schools receive the appropriate level of support and intervention. All schools have access to universal. supports, and Tier 2 and 3 schools have access to additional layers of customized support.



Early Outcomes

CSI's service to English Learners and Gifted & Talented students remains consistent and reflective of the state average. Service to students who qualify for special education and those who qualify for 504 plans continue to trend upward.

Expanding Frontiers in Public Education

1600 N Broadway Ste. 1250 Denver, CO 80202 • P: 303.866.3299 • F: 303.866.2530 • www.csi.state.co.us

Special Education



The Charter School Institute (CSI) is committed to fostering high-quality charter school options with a particular focus on service to and performance of underserved populations. CSI has established the following initiatives to provide greater supports around special education services.

Capacity-Building Initiatives

CSI Special Education Coordinators

Each CSI school is assigned a CDE-licensed special education provider or administrator that serves as the designee of the CSI Special Education Director. This Special Education Coordinator provides oversight, consultation, mediation, and professional development to CSI partners with the RELAY Graduate School of each of its schools.

CSI directly employs the Special Education Coordinators rather than requiring each school to employ its own coordinator. This helps to reduce the administrative burden on schools while also providing a standard level of support across the CSI portfolio of schools.

Professional Development

CSI offers professional development and scholarship opportunities to build capacity around special education

Education to offer the Special Education Leadership Academy and a Special Education Endorsement program. In addition to regional trainings on a variety of topics offered by CSI, trainings are also offered through the Crisis Prevention Institute (CPI), an international training organization specializing in the safe management of disruptive and assaultive behavior.

Financial Supports

ECEA Funds

85% of state and federal funds flow directly to schools with the remainder spent on special education coordinators and related staff development. CSI does not charge any additional special education fees to schools.

SPED Reserve

CSI schools maintain a Special Education Reserve within their budgets to respond to unexpected needs of students with disabilities.

Higher Needs Grants

CSI works to provide assistance through grants and loans to address unanticipated costs for higher needs of students with disabilities

Partnerships

CSI partners with experts in the field to improve resources and outcomes for special education students.



RELAY/GSE



Expanding Frontiers in Public Education

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Example: Website

Who We Are

The Colorado Charter School Institute is a statewide charter school authorizer committed to creating and sustaining a portfolio of high-quality public school options that meet the needs of all students. CSI oversees 40 schools across Colorado, from Fruita to Colorado Springs, Durango to Steamboat Springs.

We believe that every child should have access to high performing school choices. We are committed to the creation and success of high-quality charter public school options that offer diverse educational models to best meet the needs of every child.

schools balances autonomy and accountability. We offer our schools flexibility to choose the educational methods that best meet the unique needs of their students, and we hold them accountable to clear expectations for performance.

Our approach to authorizing charter

About CSI



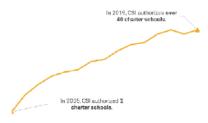


Example: Anniversary Publication

Fifteen Years Later

Fifteen years later, there are over 250 charter schools serving nearly 125,000 students Fifteen years later, to 12th grade across Colorado, Founteen percent lots poul sichool Pre-Kindergapet are schools. CSI serves over 18,000 children in over 40 charter schools across the state, from Fruit at 0 colorado Sprinas, Durandipto to Steamboat Sprinas.

While much has changed in the charter landscape and within CSI since 2004, many of the fundamental conversations and priorities of the statewide charter entity endure.



Continued Conversations

Supports vs. Autonomy

The existential discussions of the founding board and staff about the proper role of CSI in offering schools greater support versus greater autonomy are conversations that continue today. Statute clearly defines CSI as different from a school district yet with similar oversight responsibilities. CSI has shifted along the continuum between offering its schools greater supports versus greater autonomy over the years, seeking to find a balance that preserves school autonomy while also taking advantage of benefits of economies of scale.

Autonomy vs. Accountability

Similarly, CSI continues to discuss the proper level of autonomy for schools based on performance. The CSI approach to authorizing charter schools balances autonomy and accountability as CSI offers its schools the flexibility to choose the educational models and methods that best meet the unique needs of their students and communities and holds them accountable for academic, financial, and organizational performance.

All schools are held to CSI's transparent standards of performance, and schools receive annual evaluations of their performance against these standards. CSI provides tiered supports to schools based on their individual levels of performance, thereby granting greater autonomy to higher-performing schools and providing increased interventions and supports to lower-performing schools. CSI continues to consider how the balance between autonomy and accountability may differ based on factors such as proximity to resources and school model.

Colorado Governor Jared Polis, who was a member of the State Board of Education when CSI was established, shares a reflection on how CSI balances autonomy and accountability: "The Charter School Institute has played a constructive role in helping bring [student achievement] about in more areas of the state and really embrace more learning options and ways to help students achieve with differentiated learning with programs...and making sure that they're accountable as well."

A Continued Focus on At-Risk Students

CSI remains committed to fostering high-quality charter school options with a particular focus on service to and performance of at-risk students. Importantly, CSI takes an active approach to evaluating and improving upon serving all students well.

in 2015, the CSI board passed Board Resolution 1549, which affirmed CSI's commitment to closing the achievement gap and charged staff with increasing and improving services for students. The following year, CSI commissioned a Special Education Report to review the state of its special education programs and services and provide recommendations for moving forward. In 2017, CSI collaborated with the National Center for Special Education in Charter Schools to develop the Student Services Screener and Tiers of Support to assess and support schools in providing equal access and quality programs to students who qualify for specialized supports.

More recently, CSI has expanded its special education initiatives by working collaboratively with schools to increase financial resources and to build school leadership capacity to better support students with special needs.

2016

CSI does not retain administrative fees from the federal Exceptional Children's Education Act (ECEA) funds, so 100% of the federal funds flow directly to schools. Additionally, special education fund reserves have been created both at CSI and at CSI schools to address unanticipated needs.

To support school special education staffing capacity, CSI hires Special Education Coordinators on behalf of its schools. CSI also offers scholarships for school staff to participate in leadership programs to support capacity building within the portfolio.

Early outcomes of these recent initiatives are promising. CSI's service to English Learners and Gifted & Talented students remains consistent and reflective of the state average. Service to students who qualify for special education and those who qualify for 504 plans continues to trend unward.

This renewed commitment to serving all students reflects the original mission and vision of CSI.

CSI Board Resolution



Screener & Tiered Supports



Special Education
Report

Expanded Financial Supports

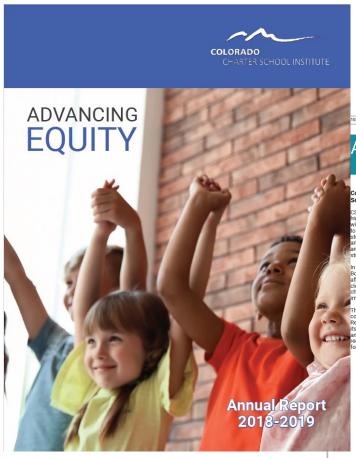


School Staff Capacity Building

13



Example: Annual Report



ADVANCING EQUITY THROUGH ORGANIZATIONAL INITIATIVES

Continued Commitment to Serving All Students

CSI remains committed to fostering In 2017, CSI collaborated with high-quality charter school options the National Center for Specia with a particular focus on service to and performance of at-risk students. Importantly, CSI takes an active approach to evaluating and improving upon serving all students well

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Education in Charter Schools to develop the Student Services Screener and Tiers of Support to assess and support schools in providing equal access and quality programs to students who qualify for specialized supports. A SPED MOU was also established to articulate clear roles and responsibilities for special

In 2018, CSI expanded its special education initiatives by partnering to offer capacity building and special education staff at CSI

education school staff.

Moving forward, CSI is working to increase financial resources to better support students with special needs

Expanded English Language Development Training

CSI hosted its first ever English Language Development (ELD) professional development series in 2018-19 in line with its organizational focus to advance equity. Trainings took place regionally, and attendees included English Learner Coordinators as well as general education teachers and staff from both CSI and non-CSI schools.

Training topics included aligning programs and procedures to support linguistically diverse students, lesson-planning considerations and differentiation strategies for a culturally and linguistically diverse student population, and practical ways to use student-level English language proficiency data in future year planning. Over 65 staff members from 26 CSI schools attended!

CSI Board At-Risk Students



Commissioning Education Report

Development of Screener & Tiered Supports



Expansion of Special Education Financial Resources





Example: Blog





Example: Presentations



Workshop: Develop Informational Materials

Material	Audience	Status (existing, to be created)
Annual Report	public	Existing
Authorizer Profile	public	To be created
Partnership Authorization	District authorizers	To be created





Our Journey



66

Public leadership requires the use of both the "head" and the "heart" to mobilize others to act effectively on behalf of shared values.



Recording Stories

4

ADVANCING EQUITY THROUGH ADVOCACY

Setting the Context

In 2017, the General Assembly passed House Bill 17-1375 to promote equity in educating public school students, and it specifically outlined the way in which districts could distribute local Mill Levy Override (MLO) funds among their schools. The law requires school districts to either distribute at least 95% of their per pupil MLO revenue to all of their schools (including charter schools) or to establish a plan that describes how the MLO dollars will be equitably distributed to all district schools.

Recognizing that CSI schools do not have access to revenue generated by local Mill Levy Overrides, HBI7-1375 created the CSI Mill Levy Equalization (MLE) Fund and allowed the legislature to allocate funding on an annual basis. Funding would ensure parity between students attending CSI schools and students attending district-run schools.

During the 2018 legislative session, the General Assembly allocated \$5.5 million to the CSI MLE Fund to be distributed in the 2018-2019 school year to CSI schools.

Protecting Our Access

The 2019 legislative session kicked off with a bill (HB19-1190) seeking to strip CSI schools of the Mill Levy Equalization Fund. Students, teachers, parents, school leaders, our fellow district-run charter schools, and education partners stepped up to ensure our voices were heard loud and clear: all public school students, including those attending CSI schools, deserve access to public resources.

One of those powerful voices was that of Sabrina, a New Legacy Charter School student. With her two-year old, Avyan, on her lap, Sabrina shared powerful testimony of her personal journey, from dropping out of school and becoming pregnant to the support and education that she and her son received at New Legacy Charter School. Thanks to the testimony and advocacy of Sabrina and many others, CSI's access to funding equity was protected with a 12-1 defeat of HB19-1190.



New Legacy Charter School student, Sabrina, and her son testifying at the Capitol

Advancing Funding Equity

The mechanism allowing CSI schools to access mill levy equalization dollars was maintained, which was a significant victory for students attending CSI schools.

As legislative session continued, the General Assembly ultimately appropriated \$7 million to the CSI Mill Levy Equalization Fund to be distributed in the 2019-2020 school year to CSI schools. In doing so, CSI schools would receive \$317 per student in additional funds.

Students attending CSI schools still see over \$1,200 less than their district peers. While there is still a long way to go to achieve funding equity through the CSI Mill Levy Equalization Fund, the outcomes from the 2019 legislative session marked another small step forward.

Per Pupil Mill Levy Override/Equalization Dollars

Traditional School

District-Authorized

CSI-Authorized Charter School

\$1,52



\$1,524



\$317



CSI believes that every public school student deserves equal access to public resources. During the 2019 legislative session, another small step towards funding equity for CSI schools was achieved.



DR. TERESA
WOODS GOES TO
DENVER
By Sean Cayton
Click to View 16 slides

Recording Stories

Denverite

News

Chalkbeat

苗 Things to Do





In a bipartisan vote, Colorado lawmakers preserve funding for state charter schools



Sabrina Suarez brought her son to advocate for her charter school, which serves young pare their children. (Sandra Fish/Cha

Mar. 06, 2019, 1:

Storytelling through pictures: Dr. Woods goes to Denver

By Sean Cayton



I'm a huge believer in photojournalism. Today, unfortunately, it hardly exists — unless it's a national or international news story — almost nothing gets documented, and I think local communities suffer greatly for it.

I still believe that photojournalism is a profound way of truth-telling and a wonderful way to tell a story. Every once in a while, I still find an opportunity to practice telling stories.

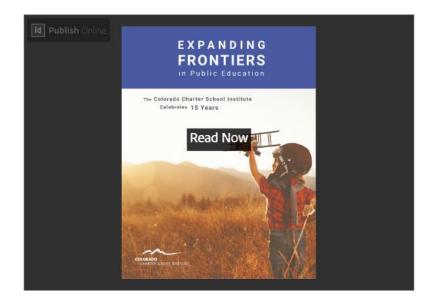


Recording Stories

CSI Celebrates 15 Years

Watch the CSI 15th Anniversary video, recording the history of CSI through interviews, or read the publication *Expanding Frontiers in Public Education* to learn more about CSI's creation, early years, and continued focuses.





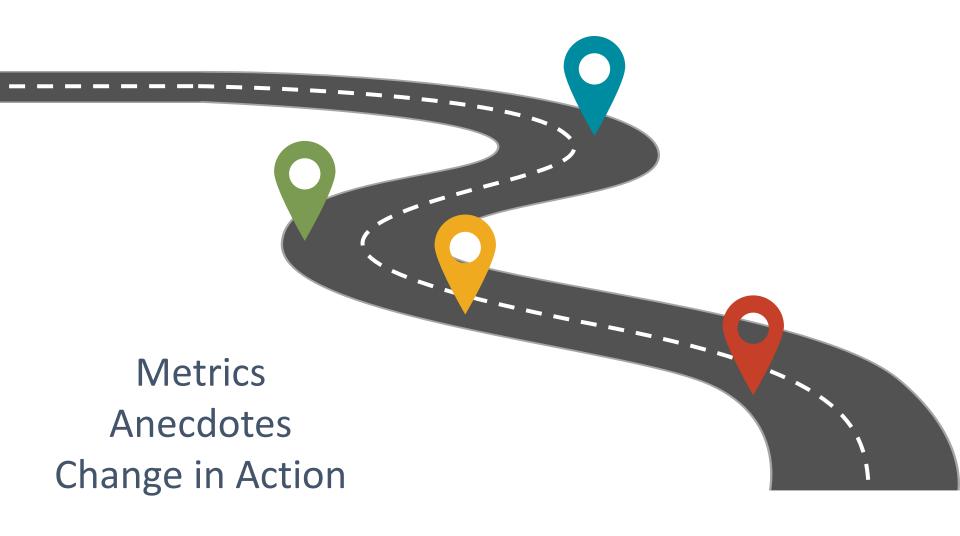
Workshop: Incorporating Stories

Key Message	Story
We serve all students	Parent with students attending different schools





Measuring Impact



THANK YOU!

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